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ABSTRACT

In 1985, a leadership liaison committee consisting of the board presidents and executive directors of five state school management associations in Pennsylvania appointed a task force to examine the board-superintendent relationship within a team management framework. After providing background information, including various definitions associated with team management, this booklet offers a brief history of school governance since 1834, covering subtle shifts in functions, reorganization and consolidation, collective bargaining, federal and state involvement, the special 1977 (Pennsylvania) commission, guiding concepts and concentration areas, policy development, inservice training, reduction of board member teams, and cooperative efforts of state educational associations and state agencies. Next, results of a 1986 survey of school officials are presented, as are results of a subsequent 11-city field test held to validate the survey findings. Trust and understanding emerged as the most important ingredients of a successful board-administrator relationship. The study also reaffirmed the 1977 commission's conclusions concerning the importance of the board-superintendent relationship and showed that superintendents support the management team concept. The questionnaire content and responses are included. (MLH)

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# The Board-Superintendent Relationship Within the Framework of the Management Team Concept

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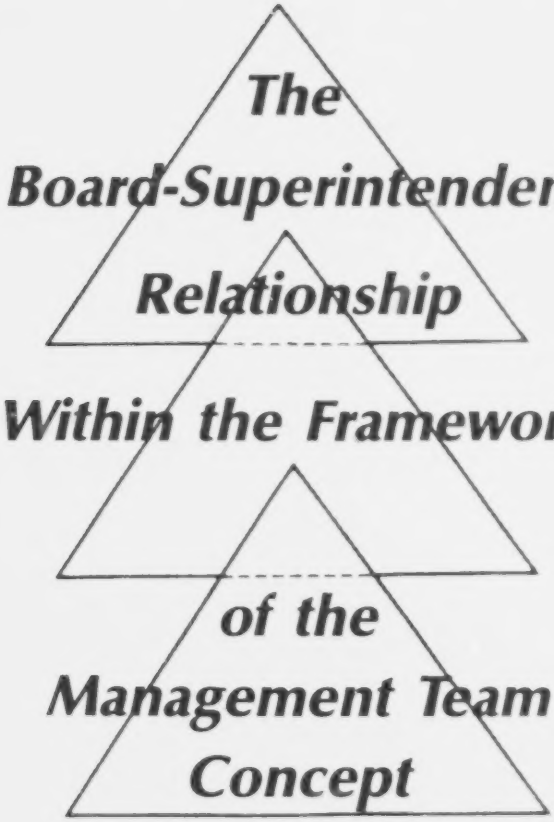
**A special task force report published by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association**



# The Board-Superintendent Relationship Within the Framework of the Management Team Concept

**A Special Task Force Report**


Compiled by members of the:

Pennsylvania Association of Elementary School Principals
Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals
Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators
Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials
Pennsylvania School Boards Association



July 1986

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# Background of Special Task Force

The Leadership Liaison Committee, comprised of the board presidents and executive directors of five state school management associations, met in July 1985 at Bucknell University and agreed to examine the board-superintendent relationship within the framework of the management team concept. A special task force was appointed for this purpose with membership from the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary School Principals, the Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals, the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. The first meeting of the group took place in August 1985 and monthly meetings occurred thereafter.

Such a study was viewed as an important step in maintaining a close working relationship between boards and administrators in the public schools of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The last major effort to examine the board-administrator relationship in Pennsylvania occurred in 1977 when a statewide commission, made up of 16 veteran school board members and 16

administrators, studied the topic. Their findings and recommendations were published in a special PSBA handbook entitled "PSBA Commission to Strengthen the Working Relationship of School Boards and Superintendents." The handbook has been widely distributed throughout the state and the nation and its message has been almost universally accepted.

Since the work of the 1977 commission, numerous changes have taken place in the management of public schools, prompting a re-examination of the board-superintendent relationship. The most notable change, in the judgment of the task force, is the emergence of a strong management team concept.

The **management team** is defined to include the board of school directors, the superintendent, other central office administrators, business officials, building principals and other personnel having administrative or supervisory responsibilities.

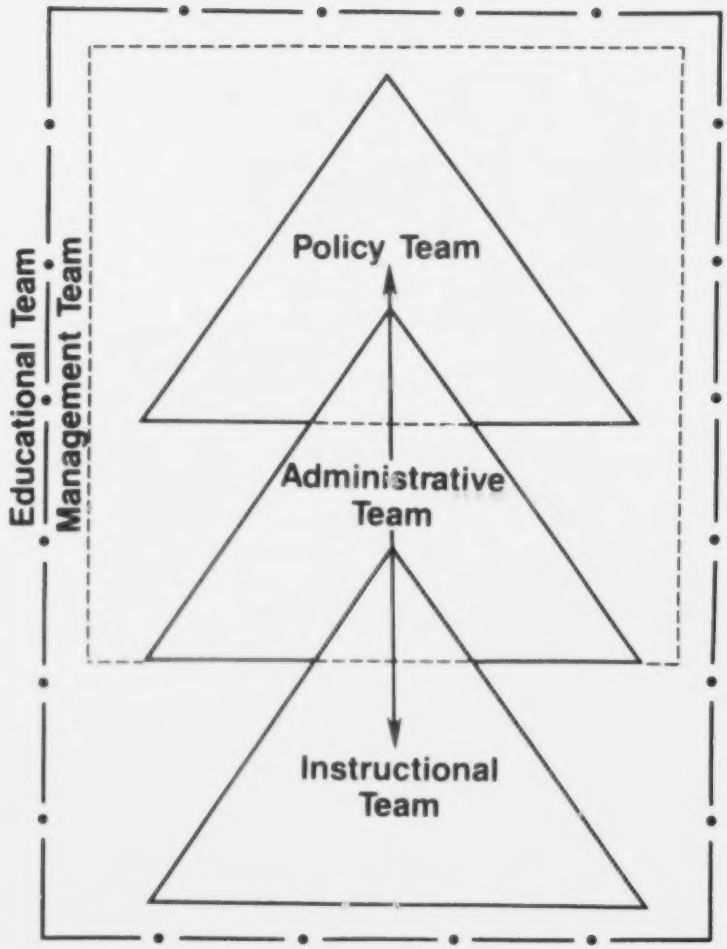
As the accompanying illustration shows, the management team is composed of the policy team and the administrative team. Add the instructional team and the three triangles constitute the education team.

The **policy team** consists of the nine board members and the superintendent, a group often referred to as "the team of 10" since the superintendent, by law, is a nonvoting member of the school board.

The superintendent is the linchpin between the policy team with whom he sits and the administrative team of which the superintendent is the leader. The **administrative team** consists of middle management persons, typically including central administrative staff, building principals and assistant principals.

The building principal is the linchpin of the **instructional team** which consists of teachers and other professional employes in each building.

After 16 years of collective bargaining, the term management team often conjures up an image of "us and them." While the


Educational Team
Management Team
Policy Team
Administrative Team
Instructional Team

focus of this task force was to examine the board-superintendent relationship within the framework of the management team concept, the task force felt it was of utmost importance that readers of this document understand that the policy team and the administrative team are part of a much larger team — the education team. No one group can do it alone. Effective instructional activities are enhanced when all three groups work together.

It is impossible to accurately measure what collegial relationships existed among the three teams before collective bargaining became law in 1970. It is also difficult to quantify how much damage has been done to the education team concept with the advent of collective bargaining. The task force was not interested in assessing either period, even if it could be accurately measured. They are interested in improving the quality of instruction for all students and recognize each team has an integral part to play in the delivery of such quality services.

The purpose of the task force was to:

- Identify the various factors which influence board-superintendent relationships.
- Determine the impact of board-superintendent relationships on the entire management team.
- Recommend principles and practices which serve to strengthen these relationships.
- Disseminate appropriate publications containing those principles and practices the management team uses in local districts.

It is hoped that the efforts of the task force, and those who participated in the survey and the field testing, will serve to strengthen Pennsylvania's public schools, in particular the working relationships of boards and administrators.

## Chronology of Special Task Force

**July 1985** — Management associations met at PSBA's Summer Workshop at Bucknell University and appointed a task force to study the board-superintendent relationship within the framework of the management team concept.

**August 1985** — Task force met and agreed on purposes and agreed to survey all school officials who constitute the management team.

**October 1985** — Second meeting; content and design of survey agreed upon.

**November 1985** — Survey mailed to approximately 8,800 management team members.

**December 1985** — Survey results tabulated and reviewed; decision made to share results in a co-sponsored round of seminars in April 1986 to seek further responses and direction.

**January 1986** — Draft document tracing the purpose and background of the management team movement in Pennsylvania reviewed for inclusion in April seminar kit materials.

**February 1986** — Publicly advertised opportunity to examine survey results in 11 seminar locations.

**March 1986** — Task force agreed on 10 findings and observations to present to April's seminar audience, along with six items for consideration by small groups at each location.

**April 1986** — Statewide seminars attracted approximately 350 people who reviewed survey results and offered practical suggestions on how to manage a school district utilizing the management team concept.

**July 1986** — Task force report published and distributed at PSBA's Summer Workshop.

# A Brief History Lesson

## △Subtle Shifts in School Governance

Legislation in 1834 entrusted school governance to local school boards. The political subdivision was the original unit of school organization, with each ward in each city and each municipality having the authority to operate schools.

Early school boards had many functions. They had to build facilities, hire teachers, purchase supplies, decide what was to be taught and raise taxes. However, within two decades, it was evident that lay school boards required professional assistance, especially in the educational areas of their governance responsibilities.

The position of county superintendent was created in 1854, and some of the school board's functions were transferred to this professional educator-manager. Through early consolidations, heavily populated districts became more complex and difficult to manage, requiring a central administrative staff and a local superintendent.

Gradually, more and more of the school board's original duties became the everyday responsibility of the superintendent and other professional employes. Virtually a whole new model of the school board was in place as a result of school district reorganization and consolidation. In this model, nine school board members establish policy to be administered by a chief executive officer, namely the superintendent.

## △Reorganization and Consolidation

Road improvements in the 1920s encouraged some consolidation as it became possible to transport children to large, centralized school locations. By the end of World War II, nearly all one-room schools had been phased out, although there were still more than 2,500 school districts in Pennsylvania in the mid-1950s. Some reorganization and consolidation was occurring voluntarily in Pennsylvania following World War II, as educators began to realize advantages in having larger classes at the senior high school level to provide for more electives.

In October 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, sparking an intense debate over education in the United States, especially at the secondary level.

In 1957, the Carnegie Foundation commissioned a study of the American high school and employed Dr. James Conant as its chief investigator. He examined the characteristics of high schools to determine which were most effective, and published his study in 1958.

Conant concluded that small high schools could not provide programs which were diverse enough to meet the needs of the Cold War culture. He considered the appropriate size high school to be one that had a graduating class of at least 100 students, and

strongly recommended school districts further consolidate to provide for the so-called comprehensive high school.

Conant also recognized that leadership in public education was vested in:

- A school board composed of intelligent, honest, devoted citizens who understand that their function is policy making and not administration.
- A first-rate superintendent.
- Good principals (thereby recognizing the nucleus of what would eventually be defined as the management team).

His recommendations were taken seriously by local school board members, administrators and policy makers at the state level. In 1961, Act 561 was enacted to provide for reorganization of school districts to require a minimum population of 22,000. The theory behind this legislation was that a district that size could afford to operate a comprehensive high school and meet or surpass Conant's minimum recommendation of 100 students per graduating class.

Act 561 created such controversy that it was repealed by Act 299 in 1963, eliminating the 22,000-student requirement which would have created districts of enormous geographical size in many parts of Pennsylvania. Act 299 also created the present nine-member structure of school boards, as well as provisions for at-large elections. Ultimately Act 299 reduced the number of districts to just more than 500, thereby virtually assuring Conant's recommendations would become a reality in Pennsylvania.

Reorganization had, and continues to have, a tremendous impact on school governance. The creation of larger districts led to a need to delegate more responsibility for school governance among the administrators in the management team.

Reorganization has increased the bureaucracy of school

governance. As a result, a district must have effective methods of communication between and among the school board and its superintendent and the administrative team. The division of governance responsibilities between the school board and the administrative team must be carefully balanced and understood. Maintaining that equilibrium is critical to the success of any district, a fact recognized by the 1977 PSBA commission.

## △Collective Bargaining

School governance was changed dramatically in 1970 with the passage of Act 195 which gave public employes the right to engage in collective bargaining. Virtually every faculty in the 505 school districts unionized and proceeded to bargain.

The school board with its superintendent and principals became "management" while teachers and other employes became "labor." Soon thereafter, literature started defining the management team and the collegial "educational team" image of less turbulent times was torn and tarnished. Governance responsibilities relating to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment could no longer be unilaterally imposed by policy. Bilateral bargaining resulting in enforceable contracts significantly altered the method of school governance.

## △Federal and State Involvement

During the 1960s and the 1970s the various roles of the board and its superintendent and administrators have been influenced by federal and state regulations and mandates and their inevitable by-products — judicial decisions and labor board rulings. Topics such as maternity leave, school records, employe rights, student

rights and education of the handicapped student (to name just a few) have all had their influence on the ways in which schools are managed.

Rand Corporation social scientist and former associate director of the National Institute of Education, Arthur E. Wise, in his 1979 book *Legislative Learning* noted: "There is a definite chain of command that runs from the federal to the state to the local level. School districts have become more hierarchial; there are more specialists and that results in a withering of local control. If schools become more bureaucratic, teachers become less professional, and the teacher becomes more of a bureaucrat." Said another way, education has always been a national concern, a state requirement and a local responsibility.

All of these events — consolidation, unionization, redefined responsibilities and greater state and federal involvement in local education efforts — have made school district governance an increasingly complex endeavor. The need to create and maintain an effective board-superintendent relationship became more evident. By the mid-1970s, the importance of a healthy board-superintendent relationship was perceived as being essential to having a successful school district operation. Hence the appointment of the 1977 commission.

## △The 1977 Commission

A special commission was convened in 1977. It was composed of 32 persons including superintendents, school directors and intermediate unit executive directors from all geographic areas of the state and different size districts.

The commission was charged to "provide leadership that will result in the improvement of local school governance for public education." Utilizing the talents and experience of its veteran mem-

bership, the commission adopted positions and made recommendations. Their concise, printed report, following a year of deliberations, has become an extensively read and often quoted document in the literature of school management and administration.

Entitled the "PSBA Commission to Strengthen the Working Relationships of School Boards and Superintendents," the 32-page booklet was, and continues to be, widely acclaimed and reprinted throughout the educational community. Its findings and recommendations are probably partially responsible for a dramatic increase in improved board-superintendent relationships in Pennsylvania and perhaps nationally. In 1982-83, the American Association of School Administrators reported that 62% of its superintendents felt they had an "excellent" relationship with their boards, up from 45% in 1976-77. Other national studies generally confirmed such findings, as did this task force's November 1985 survey. (See pages 19-33.)

The 1977 commission initially agreed upon the following three comprehensive statements which guided its several deliberations:

- The role and function of a school board needs to be well understood.
- The concept of effective school management must be the mutual objective of the school board and the superintendent.
- While change is inevitable in the operation of the schools, the effective process of evaluation is imperative.

### △Eight Concepts and Four Areas of Concentration

In addition, the commission members agreed upon eight concepts that would offer the greatest potential for a successful district

if both the board, individually and collectively, and the superintendent agreed to:

1. Keep students the center of the decision-making process.
2. Understand and respect the difference between policy and administrative rule.
3. Make a concerted effort to understand their respective legal and ethical roles and functions.
4. Keep each other informed, and avoid last minute surprises and public confrontations.
5. Remain open-minded to the suggestions of others.
6. Grow intellectually through inservice opportunities.
7. Exert leadership.
8. Make decisions appropriate to their respective responsibilities.

The commission also made 24 specific recommendations concentrating on basic areas of governance: policy development; inservice training; management-leadership; and communication. These recommendations have been a focal point in inservice training and board development programs sponsored by the management associations in Pennsylvania over the past decade. These 24 points are as follows:

• Policy Development — Direction through proper policy undergirds the entire operation of the public school system. Boards make policy.

The administrative role of the superintendent involves planning, organizing, managing, recommending, evaluating and eventually ensuring implementation of policy created by the board. The commission, therefore, recommended that policy should be:

1. The highest priority of the board.
2. Established to guide the superintendent and the entire system.

3. Developed with input from the superintendent, staff, students and the public.
4. Reduced to writing, and be as broad as possible.
5. Continuously reviewed and updated.
6. Readily accessible.
7. Reflect the needs of the community and district's goals.

• Inservice Training — The commission believed that adequate financial resources must be allocated at the local level for inservice training in order to achieve district goals and objectives. Inservice training should be encouraged for the board, superintendent and all supervisory personnel. The commission, therefore, recommended that boards should:

8. Adopt policies which encourage participation in inservice activities.
9. Provide adequate funds for inservice training.
10. Attend inservice programs at local, state and national levels and encourage staff to do the same.

• Management-Leadership — The commission viewed the management-leadership concept as a cooperative effort involving the school board and all supervisory and school management level staff operating through the superintendent. The commission, therefore, recommended that school boards:

11. Establish, as board policy, charts with line-staff relationships and position descriptions.
12. Develop compensation plans which treat management personnel in accordance with established duties and responsibilities.
13. Provide the rationale for compensation ranges and fringe benefits.

14. Ensure that management training programs are available.
15. Have a policy for evaluating management personnel.
16. Annually assess the performance of the superintendent.
17. Adopt methods for self-evaluation.
18. Annually establish goals and objectives for the district.

• Communication — The commission believed that an elected school board and their administrators have a mandate to communicate to all citizens. Also honest, straightforward two-way communication programs between local school officials and their constituents are absolutely necessary in retaining public confidence and support for public schools. The commission supported the position that communication programs (requiring some public expenditures), which can be supported, evaluated and measured, provide a long-term benefit for students. Such programs are not frills. The commission, therefore, recommended that boards should:

19. Have a communication policy which is shared with and understood by the school and the community.
20. Prepare a brochure and other handouts, including the agenda, for public board meetings to include how the public may address the board.
21. Have a newsletter which goes to all employes.
22. Establish methods of communication with the news media on a regular basis.
23. Establish communication systems that will provide feedback between the board and its various publics.
24. Provide an annual report to the community explaining the school district's programs, services and progress.

## △Board Member Terms Reduced

Within the year after the report by the 1977 commission, legislation changed the term of office of board members. Act 105 of 1978 reduced the years of such elected volunteer service from six years to four.

Implementation of that law resulted in six positions in each district being open in 1983 and four in 1985. Starting in 1987 a minimum of four or five seats will be up for re-election every two years.

PSBA and other educational groups had accurately forecast increased board turnover should such a law be passed. The number of years of school board service has steadily decreased since the law was passed. Such turnover and the need for increased board training in a relatively short period of time hampers the decision-making process between boards and school management.

## △Cooperative Efforts

Nevertheless, the cooperative efforts of state educational associations and state agencies have addressed this challenge in a cooperative process with both financial resources and staff expertise. Over the past decade, the Leadership Liaison Committee has attempted to serve as a model of cooperative relationships. The jointly supported Summer Workshop at Bucknell University is but one example of activities which have resulted from monthly meetings of the Leadership Liaison Committee. Other accomplishments include the 1977 commission and co-sponsorship of several rounds of seminars every year.

Likewise, the passage of Act 93 (1984), supported by all the school management associations, provided a compensation process for principals in a manner consistent with the vision of the

1977 commission. The implementation of this legislation in a rational and effective manner should strengthen board-administrator relations and school management in Pennsylvania.

# Survey Design and Results

The task force agreed early in its deliberations not to rely solely on the expertise and opinions of a handful of people, as the 1977 commission did. Rather, it invited broad-based participation through the use of a questionnaire and a subsequent field test of the survey results during an 11-city seminar in April 1986.

Questionnaires were mailed to some 8,800 school officials (all 4,509 school board members and approximately 4,300 administrators); 764 board members (approximately 17% of those polled) and 1,238 administrators (approximately 25% of those polled) responded. (The questionnaire with the number of responses appears on pages 24-26.)

Written comments were added by 498 people. The most frequent comment (73) dealt with the fact that people found it difficult to list five "least essentials" as required by Part II of the questionnaire. The next four topics which generated the highest number of comments were: knowing roles and responsibilities (39); trust and understanding (32); importance of communication (32); and subcommittees vs. committees of the whole (30).

The results of the survey demonstrated what the task force came to call a "tight shot group." This marksmanship metaphor was used to describe the fact that no matter how the results were analyzed (by job description, size of district, type of district, etc.), the results were incredibly congruent. (See pages 29-33.)

There were five purposes of the 11-city field test. To allow all participants to: review the data; question or challenge the preliminary findings and recommendations of the task force; question or challenge the validity of the survey-validation process, including its design and implementation; raise other issues inherent in the raw data; and discuss how to build and maintain a mutually respectful relationship.

## △Observations and Findings of the Task Force

The task force presented the following observations and conclusions for the consideration of the field-test participants.

1. The most important ingredient to a successful board-administrator relationship is "trust and understanding" (such as an understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of board members and administrators). This is consistent with the 1977 commission which entitled the summary section of its report "An Atmosphere of Trust and Understanding" and went on to say:

> The atmosphere of trust and understanding is individually and collectively earned by past performance. And although each may have an individual style of leadership that needs to be recognized, there must be a visibility of unity in purpose that is generated at the top, and that ultimately works its way to all levels of school management and district operations. Openness, honesty and individual integrity are key ingredients in fostering an atmosphere of trust and understanding.

Trust and understanding received more votes (1,366) in the "most essential" category than any other single item. In fact, it received almost twice as many votes. (See p. 27.) Furthermore, among respondents that perceived their district as **not** having trust and understanding, they rated it as the most desirable factor, giving it an 8.9 on a 10-point scale. (See pages 25 and 28.)

2. The 1985 survey reaffirms the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the 1977 commission as to the importance of the board-superintendent relationship. A strong relationship between the board and superintendent is critical to the success of the system, based on mutual trust and understanding of roles and responsibilities.

3. Superintendents should and do support the management team. This item ranked as the third most important factor in all returns (see p. 27), and among principals it ranked first. (See p. 29.)

4. "Following current policy and administrative rules and regulations" were cited as the third and fifth most effective factors, scoring 7.7 out of a possible 10 on all returns. (See p. 28.) The task force concurs. These documents are critical to the success of any system.

5. The superintendent should provide recommendations for action items for board consideration with supporting rationale. This item registered first in importance with a 7.9 out of a possible 10 points. (See p. 28.) To the task force, this reinforces the notion that the superintendent is looked to for guidance and advice. The task force believes an effective superintendent seeks and encourages input from all persons in the management team in formulating that advice.

6. "Communicating expectations" is a two-way street and both board members and administrators rated communication as a critical component: 819 respondents said it was important

for the board to communicate its expectations to the superintendent; 537 felt it was important for the superintendent to communicate expectations to the board, thereby placing those items second and fifth on the most essential list. (See p. 27.) It is the task force's sense that it is harder for the superintendent to correctly read nine people than it is for nine people to understand the superintendent. Or, as one superintendent put it, "I've got nine board members with 18 expectations. It's hard for them to agree on priorities. Imagine how difficult it is for me to satisfy those 18 expectations simultaneously."

7. The factor seen as least essential (and presumably detrimental) was item 13, "Board policy which would allow individual board members to request reports from individual administrators." The task force views such a policy as tantamount to anarchy and the antithesis of team work. (See p. 27.)

8. The design of the survey was "flawed" inasmuch as most of the 27 items were viewed as positive, so much so that 73 people commented it was difficult (if not impossible) to list five "least essential (perhaps detrimental) factors."

9. The task force's sense of the responses to items 8 and 9 regarding use of subcommittees vs. a committee of the whole (arrived at by reading the 30 comments about these two questions) is that both systems have pros and cons. Obviously, all districts operate as a committee of the whole to transact business during sunshine meetings. Very few respondents perceived operating with (or without) a subcommittee structure to be critical to the success of the district. Most saw the existence of (or lack of) subcommittees as a matter of preference or management style.

10. Notwithstanding the fact that the design of the questionnaire did not offer many items which were truly detrimental, the task force was somewhat surprised that item 6 ("Team members

take the time to get to know each other as individuals") and item 22 ("The board engages in systematic **self**-evaluation") found their way into the "least essential (perhaps detrimental)" category.

The task force wanted to explore the reasons why responses to these two items ranked so low in comparison to other possible choices. The task force felt that time spent getting to know each other as individuals, as opposed to knowing someone in their **official position,** would be an important ingredient in fostering trust and understanding.

Likewise, in a business where constant evaluation of policy, systems and projects is a common occurrence, the task force felt it was paradoxical that respondents would rank self-evaluation as not very essential.

Consequently, the task force included these two items for discussion in its 11-city field test, noting that other statewide surveys have suggested that less than 20% of boards engage in any form of self-evaluation.

PSBA has instruments that help boards engage in self-evaluation and others that permit administrators to evaluate board performance. These instruments, properly administered, measure **not** how effective a particular program or project operates; they measure the process of decision making, public image, meeting effectiveness and perceptions of others.

## △The Questionnaire and Responses

On the following pages, the statements of the questionnaire are reprinted along with the number of responses in each area. Participants were asked to indicate whether the statement described their district by checking "yes" or "no." If the answer was yes, they were to rate its effectiveness; if no, they were to rate the desirability of the statement. The rating was on a 1-10 scale.

## PART I

1. Besides the superintendent, administrators are encouraged to be present and to participate freely at both workshop and sunshine meetings of the board.
2. A current performance evaluation system exists for the superintendent.
3. A current performance evaluation system exists for most administrators.
4. The management team has special planning sessions, besides regular monthly meetings.
5. Job descriptions exist for most administrators.
6. Team members take the time to get to know each other as individuals.
7. The superintendent supports the management team concept.
8. Standing subcommittees of the board exist.
9. The board operates as a committee of the whole.
10. The management team establishes several goals.
11. An atmosphere of trust and understanding exists between the board and the superintendent.
12. Outside of meetings, most communications between board members and administrators flow through the superintendent.
13. Board policy permits individual board members to request reports from individual administrators.
14. The superintendent provides recommendations for action items for the board's consideration with supporting rationale.
15. Policy manuals are current.
16. Policy manuals are followed.
17. Administrative rules are current.
18. Administrative rules are followed.
19. Board policy encourages inservice training for all members of the management team.
20. The board's expectations are clearly communicated to the superintendent.
21. The superintendent's expectations are clearly communicated to the board.
22. The board engages in systematic self-evaluation.
23. The board's and superintendent's evaluations are discussed prior to making the results a matter of record.

| We Have (Yes) | Effectiveness (1-10) | We Don't Have (No) | Desirability (1-10) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1,515 | 6.8 | 413 | 5.4 |
| 1,082 | 6.3 | 776 | 6.9 |
| 1,506 | 6.1 | 422 | 7.1 |
| 1,457 | 7.2 | 458 | 6.4 |
| 1,819 | 7.3 | 108 | 6.9 |
| 1,578 | 7.1 | 318 | 6.3 |
| 1,742 | 7.5 | 165 | 7.4 |
| 1,587 | 6.6 | 336 | 3.4 |
| 1,327 | 7.1 | 530 | 4.1 |
| 1,504 | 7.0 | 398 | 7.1 |
| 1,569 | 7.4 | 330 | 8.9 |
| 1,694 | 7.1 | 232 | 6.2 |
| 692 | 5.8 | 1,168 | 2.6 |
| 1,851 | 7.9 | 58 | 6.8 |
| 1,587 | .9 | 334 | 8.6 |
| 1,739 | 7.7 | 169 | 8.5 |
| 1,653 | 7.7 | 241 | 7.7 |
| 1,704 | 7.7 | 179 | 7.4 |
| 1,567 | 7.4 | 354 | 7.6 |
| 1,573 | 7.1 | 310 | 8.6 |
| 1,698 | 7.3 | 182 | 8.4 |
| 456 | 6.0 | 1,372 | 7.3 |
| 1,075 | 7.2 | 696 | 6.8 |

24. My working relationship with my board is *(superintendents only)*: **Please circle one number**

| 1 . . . 2 | 3 . . . 4 | 5 . . . 6 | 7 . . . 8 | 9 . . . 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good (7.9) | Extremely Good |

25. My working relationship with my superintendent is *(Board members only)*: **Please circle one number**

| 1 . . . 2 | 3 . . . 4 | 5 . . . 6 | 7 . . . 8 | 9 . . . 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good (7.5) | Extremely Good |

26. My relationship with my superintendent is *(principals and other administrators only)*: **Please circle one number**

| 1 . . . 2 | 3 . . . 4 | 5 . . . 6 | 7 . . . 8 | 9 . . . 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good (7.6) | Extremely Good |

27. My relationship with my principals and other administrators is *(superintendents only)*: **Please circle one number**

| 1 . . . 2 | 3 . . . 4 | 5 . . . 6 | 7 . . . 8 | 9 . . . 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good (8.1) | Extremely Good |

## PART II

Please indicate by number which **five of the 27 statements** are **absolutely essential** to an effective board-superintendent-management team relationship and which **five are least essential** (or perhaps even detrimental) to an effective relationship.

**Essential Nos.**

Statements: _____

(List 5)

**Least Essential Nos.**

Statements: _____

(List 5)

## △The 'Tight Shot Group' Results

**All Returns**

| Most Essential | Number of Responses |
|---|---|
| An atmosphere of trust and understanding exists between the board and the superintendent. (Item 11) | 1,366 |
| The board's expectations are clearly communicated to the superintendent. (Item 20) | 819 |
| The superintendent supports the management team concept. (Item 7) | 808 |
| The superintendent provides recommendations for action for the board's consideration with supporting rationale. (Item 14) | 551 |
| The superintendent's expectations are clearly communicated to the board. (Item 21) | 537 |
| **Least Essential (Perhaps Detrimental)** | |
| Board policy permits individual board members to request reports from individual administrators. (Item 13) | 1,280 |
| Standing subcommittees of the board exist. (Item 8) | 753 |
| Team members take the time to get to know each other as individuals. (Item 6) | 647 |
| The board operates as a committee of the whole. (Item 9) | 581 |
| The board engages in systematic self-evaluation. (Item 22) | 526 |

**All Returns**

| Yes We Have-Most Effective | How Effective |
|---|---|
| The superintendent provides recommendations for action items for the board's consideration with supporting rationale. (Item 14) | 7.9 |
| Policy manuals are current. (Item 15) | 7.9 |
| Policy manuals are followed. (Item 16) | 7.7 |
| Administrative rules are current. (Item 17) | 7.7 |
| Administrative rules are followed. (Item 18) | 7.7 |

| No We Don't Have-Desirable to Have | |
|---|---|
| An atmosphere or trust and understanding exists between the board and the superintendent. (Item 11) | 8.9 |
| Policy manuals are current. (Item 15) | 8.6 |
| The board's expectations are clearly communicated to the superintendent. (Item 20) | 8.6 |
| Policy manuals are followed. (Item 16) | 8.5 |
| The superintendent's expectations are clearly communicated to the board. (Item 21) | 8.4 |

**Most Essential Factors by Position**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | 11 | 20 | 7 | 14 | 21 |
| President | 11 | 20 | 21 | 14 | 2 |
| Board Member | 11 | 20 | 21 | 7 | 2 |
| All Board Members | 11 | 20 | 14 | 21 | 7 |
| Superintendent | 11 | 20 | 14 | 21 | 7 |
| Business Officer | 11 | 7 | 1 | 20 | 14 |
| Principal | 7 | 11 | 4 | 10 | 20 |
| All Administrators | 11 | 7 | 20 | 21 | 10 |

**Legend**

**1** — Besides the superintendent, administrators are encouraged to be present and to participate freely at both workshop and sunshine meetings of the board.

**2** — A current performance evaluation system exists for the superintendent.

**4** — The management team has special planning sessions, besides regular monthly meetings.

**7** — The superintendent supports the management team concept.

**10** — The management team establishes several goals.

**11** — An atmosphere of trust and understanding exists between the board and the superintendent.

**14** — The superintendent provides recommendations for action items for the board's consideration with supporting rationale.

**20** — The board's expectations are clearly communicated to the superintendent.

**21** — The superintendent's expectations are clearly communicated to the board.

**Least Essential (Perhaps Detrimental) Factors By Position**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| Board President | 13 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 22 |
| Board Member | 13 | 6 | 8 | 22 | 9 |
| All Board Members | 13 | 6 | 8 | 22 | 9 |
| Superintendent | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| Business Officer | 13 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 22 |
| Principal | 13 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 1 |
| All Administrators | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |

**Legend**

**1** — Besides the superintendent, administrators are encouraged to be present and to participate freely at both workshop and sunshine meetings of the board.

**6** — Team members take the time to get to know each other as individuals.

**8** — Standing subcommittees of the board exist.

**9** — The board operates as a committee of the whole.

**13** — Board policy permits individual board members to request reports from individual administrators.

**22** — The board engages in systematic self-evaluation.

**Most Essential Factors by Type of District***

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | 11 | 20 | 7 | 14 | 20 |
| Urban | 11 | 7 | 20 | 14 | 12 |
| Suburban-Urban | 11 | 20 | 7 | 21 | 15 |
| Suburban | 11 | 20 | 7 | 21 | 14 |
| Suburban-Rural | 11 | 7 | 20 | 14 | 21 |
| Rural | 11 | 20 | 7 | 1 | 14 |

*The respondents were asked to define their own district; no guidelines were provided for these five categories.

**Legend**

**1** — Besides the superintendent, administrators are encouraged to be present and to participate freely at both workshops and sunshine meetings of the board.

**7** — The superintendent supports the management team concept.

**11** — An atmosphere of trust and understanding exists between the board and the superintendent.

**12** — Outside of meetings, most communications between board members and administrators flow through the superintendent.

**14** — The superintendent provides recommendations for action items for the board's consideration with supporting rationale.

**15** — Policy manuals are current.

**20** — The board's expectations are clearly communicated to the superintendent.

**21** — The superintendent's expectations are clearly communicated to the board.

**Least Essential (Perhaps Detrimental) Factors by Type of District**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| Urban | 13 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| Suburban-Urban | 13 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 22 |
| Suburban | 13 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 22 |
| Suburban-Rural | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| Rural | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |

**Legend**

**1** — Besides the superintendent, administrators are encouraged to be present and to participate freely at both workshop and sunshine meetings of the board.

**6** — Team members take the time to get to know each other as individuals.

**8** — Standing subcommittees of the board exist.

**9** — The board operates as a committee of the whole.

**13** — Board policy permits individual board members to request reports from individual administrators.

**22** — The board engages in systematic self-evaluation.

**Most Essential Factors by Student Population**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | 11 | 20 | 7 | 14 | 21 |
| 0 - 2,500 | 11 | 20 | 7 | 14 | 21 |
| 2,500 - 5,000 | 11 | 7 | 20 | 14 | 21 |
| 5,000 and up | 11 | 7 | 20 | 21 | 14 |

**Legend**

**7** — The superintendent supports the management team concept.

**11** — An atmosphere of trust and understanding exists between the board and the superintendent.

**14** — The superintendent provides recommendations for action items for the board's consideration with supporting rationale.

**20** — The board's expectations are clearly communicated to the superintendent.

**21** — The superintendent's expectations are clearly communicated to the board.

**Least Essential Factors by Student Population**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| 0 - 2,500 | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| 2,500 - 5,000 | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |
| 5,000 and up | 13 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 22 |

**Legend**

**6** — Team members take the time to get to know each other as individuals.

**8** — Standing subcommittees of the board exist.

**9** — The board operates as a committee of the whole.

**13** — Board policy permits individual board members to request reports from individual administrators.

**22** — The board engages in systematic self-evaluation.

# The Field Survey Validation Process

The following pages represent a synthesis of the thinking, deliberations and debate that occurred among approximately 350 school officials in 11 field test locations during April 1986.

## △Six Topics: How and Why They were Selected

In each location the audience (after learning of the purpose, design and results of the survey) was divided into several groups. Each group was allotted 60 minutes and asked to consider one or more of the following topics:

1. Trust and Understanding: How to Create and Maintain it in the Management Team
2. Communicating Expectations: How to do it Effectively
3. How to Effectively Involve Administrators in Meetings

4. The Board Evaluates its Superintendent
5. Should the Board Engage in Some Type of Self-Evaluation Regarding Board Operations?
6. Getting to Know Each Other as People (as opposed to people in positions)

All six topics were selected by the task force to provide some structure and consistency to the many sessions conducted by different people in each location. Topics 1 and 2 were selected because they scored the highest as the two most essential ingredients for success. (See p. 27.)

The task force chose item 3 because it felt it was of paramount importance to the management team concept for administrators to be involved in various kinds of meetings in meaningful ways. Although the responses to item 2 indicated only 60% of boards engage in some **formal** evaluation of the superintendent, the task force felt so strongly that this process should occur in **every** district, topic 4 was included to solicit ideas and opinions about the process.

Topics 5 and 6 were selected because the task force (while it recognized a flaw in the design of the survey in trying to force respondents to name "five least essential" factors) was surprised these two topics rated as low as they did. Consequently, clarification was sought.

In several locations the audience was asked to vote again on topics 5 and 6. In these locations approximately 60% voted "board self-evaluation" belonged in the 6-10 range of essential factors, 30% put it in the 11-22 range, and 10% kept it in the bottom five (23-27).

"Taking the time to know each other" was revoted and split equally among the three ranges offered as choices (6-10, 11-22, 23-27.)

Like all things, these six topics can have advantages and disad-

vantages. Each group recognized that in each instance (except one — "Taking the time to know each other") the advantages greatly outweighed the disadvantages. The task force chose to call the disadvantages "cautions," acknowledging that they can serve as valuable reminders for the majority of any group to be sensitive to the perceptions of others.

## △Accumulated Comments from 11 Locations

### Topic 1
### Trust and Understanding:
### How to Create and Maintain it in the Management Team

1. Understand respective roles as policy makers and administrators.
2. Information should be shared among all through formal communication channels.
3. Be open and honest, no surprises.
4. Work as a group, not as a group of individuals.
5. Have solid policy and be consistent in its application.
6. Deal in issues, not personalities.
7. Keep confidential matters confidential.
8. Set goals.
9. Listen and be open minded.
10. Agree you have a right to disagree about issues and agree not to be disagreeable after a decision is made.
11. Involve administrators in meaningful ways.
12. Recognize administrators efforts.
13. Give administrators the latitude to get the job done; responsibility without authority is a worthless commodity.
14. Support the management team concept by words and actions.

15. The superintendent should hold regular meetings with administrative team.
16. Identify conflicts and resolve them when possible.

**Cautions**

1. Trust and understanding will be tarnished and torn every time any of the above advice is ignored.
2. It's hard to create and maintain trust and understanding; it's easy to destroy it. Board members and administrators **must constantly work** at maintaining it, and improving it, once established.

**Topic 2**
**Commmunicating Expectations:**
**How to do it Effectively**

1. The superintendent is the linchpin between the board (policy team) and the administrators (administrative team) and as such needs to keep both informed of the other's activities.
2. Be honest and candid, no secret agendas. Blunt is better than tactful if push comes to shove.
3. Clarity and precision in phrasing and drafting of statements and motions is very important.
4. Use retreat sessions to set goals and priorities. Review and update, as necessary.
5. Policy manuals which are up to date and accessible represent a good way to communicate effectively.
6. Regular meetings with input from all with proper time to discuss multiple options and recommendations.
7. Current job descriptions and evaluation instruments help to define expectations.
8. Use the chain of command.

9. Informal work sessions to air ideas and conflicts are a must.
10. The superintendent should schedule time for individual sessions with administrators.
11. Conduct orientation programs for new board members and administrators.

**Cautions**

1. Expectations should not be too hard or too easy to attain.
2. Expectations should not be unilaterally imposed with input and recommendations from administrators.
3. Communicating just among the majority leads to deeper splits.

## Topic 3
## How to Effectively Involve Administrators in Board Meetings

(In most locations, groups considered meetings on three levels: sunshine, workshop, and subcommittee.)

1. Involvement at workshop and subcommittee meetings of the board should be **on an as-needed basis** and depends a lot on size of district.
2. Administrators should be required to attend all public board meetings and follow-up sessions conducted by the superintendent. Should be held to implement new policy decisions.
3. Ask for their expertise and advice in formal and informal ways. Use where appropriate and explain **why** the advice is not followed when recommendations are rejected.
4. Administrative team members should receive advance copies of board agendas.
5. Board members should not surprise administrators or put them on the spot in public meetings.

6. Include administrators in board retreat and goal-setting sessions.
7. Create and maintain a climate whereby administrators who speak out on the "wrong side" of an issue will not feel threatened or fear reprisals.

**Cautions**

1. Administrators can use board meetings to advance personal or building-level priorities not congruent with district goals.
2. Board members should avoid reacting to personalities of administrators; they should remain issue oriented.
3. **Without trust and understanding,** involvement will not be effective.

**Topic 4**
**The Board Evaluates its Superintendent:**
**Advantages of Having a Formal Evaluation Process**

1. Improves communications, expectations, professional growth.
2. Identifies superintendent's strengths and weaknesses.
3. Maintains high accountability level.
4. Justifies compensation increases.
5. Keeps focus on pre-selected goals and criteria.
6. Superintendent knows where he stands with the entire board which should increase trust and understanding.
7. Sets precedent for evaluation of others (including the board).
8. It is a method of communicating to the public the expectations and results of the superintendent's role.

**Caution**

Any instrument can be subjectively used to "get" the superin-

tendent and if the results are made public, possibly ruin confidence in the district.

### Topic 5
### Should the Board Engage in Some Type of Self-Evaluation Regarding Board Operations?

#### Advantages

1. Holds the board to a standard as board holds others to a standard.
2. Allows each board member to reflect on own behavior as well as the performance of the group.
3. Fosters communication among board members.
4. Should help in making better decisions if approached with the philosophy that all people and groups can improve.
5. Should result in a professional approach by the board, especially if conducted at a meeting when there is not other business on the agenda.
6. Identifies **group** strengths and weaknesses.
7. Can help resolve differences of opinion.
8. Gives insight to new board members.
9. Gives board direction and an opportunity to evaluate achievements.

**Several groups addressed the issue of having the board be evaluated by the administrators as well as by themselves. They contributed the following comments:**

10. Provides opportunity to see ourselves (collectively) as others see us if we allow our administrators to evaluate our behavior.
11. Use of neutral facilitator who can focus on issues and process and avoid personalities is a must.

**Cautions**

1. May make a minority factor of a board more defensive.
2. Could increase opportunity for personality clashes between board members.
3. Might expose individual weaknesses.

**NOTE:** Advantages outweighed cautions 9-2 in the 11 locations.

**Topic 6**
**Getting to Know Each Other as People**

1. Develops trust, understanding and concern for others.
2. Enables one to gain perspective as to what motivates people.
3. Develops team spirit.
4. Allows for a freer flow of information.

**Cautions**

1. Can lead to cliques and splits.
2. Can lead to personality clashes.
3. Might lead to voting based on friendships as opposed to voting on the issue.
4. Structured "get to know you" sessions can be too personal, time consuming and embarrassing.

**NOTE:** Advantages outweighed cautions according to three groups; five groups had no opinion, and three groups thought cautions outweighed advantages.

# Summary

It is the task force's sense that the questionnaire's data and the follow-up activity on the 11-city field test indicate:

△The recommendations and conclusions of the 1977 board-superintendent commission have been reaffirmed.

△The concept of the management team is alive and doing very well in the commonwealth. Although some districts don't have as strong a management team as might be desirable, the data strongly suggest that having a management team is viewed as desirable by all groups surveyed.

△The task force has identified what works to create and maintain positive relationships and strong school systems.

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